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## THE FLYLEAF

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### DR. NORBECK ADDRESSES THE FRIENDS

A meeting of the FRIENDS OF THE FONDREN LIBRARY was held in the Lecture Lounge on Thursday, March 17. About seventy-five members and guests were present. A new slate of officers was presented by the nominating committee and was elected unanimously.

Those chosen were: William V. Ballew, Jr., President; Mrs. C. M. Hudspeth, Vice-President; Mrs. Charles W. Hamilton, Membership Secretary; Charles W. Hamilton, Treasurer. A new Board of Directors is composed of Mrs. Albert Fay, Professor Roger Goldwyn, Mr. J. Frank Jungman, Mrs. Ralph D. Looney, Mrs. Preston Moore, Professor Frank Vandiver.

The Treasurer, Charles Hamilton, presented his annual report.

The speaker of the evening, Professor Edward Norbeck, head of the anthropology department at Rice and editor of the FLYLEAF, spoke to the FRIENDS on the subject, "Japanese Colleges and Universities." Dr. Norbeck's interesting address appears in this issue of the FLYLEAF.

## DESIDERATA

The following list represents missing issues of publications in the Fondren's periodical files. These are hard to come by through the usual commercial channels. If interested FRIENDS can supply any of these publications, such gifts will be greatly appreciated.

American Medical Association, Journal	Jan. 10, 1966
Current History	Jan., 1962 and Jan., 1963
Flying	Jan., 1965
Life 5 copies of each	Jan 13, 20, 27 and Feb. 3, 1958
Navy	May, 1964
North American Review no. 4	Dec., 1965
Plaisir de France	April, 1965
Realities	May, Aug., 1965
Reporter	Vol. 33, no. 2, July, 1965
The Rice Thresher	Vol. 52, no. 12, Dec. 10, 1964
Technology and Culture	Vol. 5, no. 1, 1964
Texas Observer	Vol. 56, no. 3, Feb., 1964 no. 5, Mar., 1964 no. 22, Nov., 1964
	Vol. 57, no. 19, Oct., 1964
Time	Vol. 53, Feb. 21, 1949

## JAPANESE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

For some years American scholars of Japanese culture have observed that Japanese and American ideals concerning work and success are curiously similar. I refer to what has often been called the "Protestant ethic" in the United States and Europe, the high value placed upon hard work, thrift, and success in economic activities or in other pursuits that in one way or another represent service to society. In Japan, a high value has also long been placed upon achievement and, as steps leading to achievement, upon industry and thrift. Modern conditions of industrial and urban life have not changed these values. The Japanese word commonly translated as "lazy" means much more than indolence; it implies a moral judgment that the lazy person is also untrustworthy and undesirable as a member of society.

No attempt will be made here to explain how the Japanese "ethic" in question became established. It is necessary, however, to explain how it relates to the subject of Japanese colleges and universities. In the minds of most Japanese today, the key to achievement, to success, is education. Advanced education has come to mean increased assurance of success, and the demand for higher education has for some years far exceeded the supply.

Preparation for college begins, on the part of parents, when their children are still infants, and it involves competition among parents as well as among children. Competition that aims toward college runs through the whole range of schools from kindergarten through high school. Certain schools have reputations of excellence, and, what is more important, certain high schools have records of outstanding success in the number of their graduates who

gain admission to desirable colleges and universities. A common practice is for families to change residence from one part of a city to another so that the children may qualify for admission to a highly-rated kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, or high school. Competition of this sort is especially keen in Tokyo, which holds over one-tenth of the nation's population and over one-fourth of its colleges and universities. During 1964, Japanese newspapers carried articles about the competition to enter a Tokyo kindergarten. Mothers who hoped to gain admission for their children queued day and night for two days at the admissions office of the kindergarten awaiting the announced hour when applications would first be received.

Nine years of education are compulsory in Japan and are provided for every normal child. Coercion to attend school is rarely necessary, and Japan has one of the lowest illiteracy rates of the world, lower than that of the United States. It is after the compulsory education has been completed that the competition for a place in college becomes truly fierce. Almost anyone who desires a high school education may find a place in either a public or private school, although the school may not be one that is desired. Admission to the fine high schools depends upon entrance examinations and, it is said, sometimes upon the wealth and influence of the applicant's parents.

Admission to a college or university is a far more critical matter, and for a decade it has been one of great national concern. The intensity of the struggle to enter colleges and universities probably finds no parallel elsewhere in the world. A news report of February 15, 1966, from the Consulate General of Japan in New York informs that applications for admission to national universities are "expected to number seven times the capacity of the existing institutions of higher learning."



Admission to colleges and universities supported by national or local governmental funds and to most private colleges and universities depends upon high school records and performances in entrance exams. The exams of the most prestigious universities are looked upon as formidable hurdles for which the candidate must prepare himself with the greatest care. Tokyo and all other large cities of Japan contain many non accredited schools that exist solely to cram students for college entrance exams.

A period of tension and suffering over admission to college has become part of the annual cycle of Japanese life. No normal citizen can fail to be aware of the crisis. In winter the dreaded entrance examinations are conducted. For candidates and their relatives a period of tense waiting follows until the announcements of successful admission are made. At this time the entire nation is made aware of the results. The number of students admitted to universities is news of prime importance that is broadcast daily by radio and television to the waiting nation in a manner much like that of announcing the results of baseball games. Several times daily radio and television stations announce the number of admissions to each department or discipline of the major national and local universities.

Unsuccessful candidates frequently wait a year and try again. Those who take the exams more than once are called ronin, a name taken from that of knights of feudal times who lost their masters through death or political manoeuvres. Only very rarely do those who are unsuccessful follow over-publicized tradition and commit suicide. Suicide on these grounds would today truly be a national catastrophe. A news report from Japan dated January, 1966, reports that approximately a half-million ronin were expected to take the exams this year. Ronin sometimes try year after year to pass the exams of the most highly rated universities, and jokes tell

of professional ronin who devote their lives to taking the exams.

Consideration of economic and social changes that have taken place in Japan during the past century, and especially since the end of World War II, explains some of the circumstances that have led to the crisis the nation now faces in higher education. These changes may be summarized briefly in the statement that Japan has undergone drastic cultural alteration with such speed that facilities for education have not been able to keep pace with the demand. After nearly two and one-half centuries of self-imposed isolation, Japan opened itself to the rest of the world only a century ago. Japan was then a nation of thirty million people, most of whom were illiterate peasant farmers. About 85 per cent of the population derived its livelihood from farming or other rural occupations such as forestry and fishing. In certain forms of aesthetics and the arts Japan then certainly stood out in the world, but in the development of science and technology and in many other respects it seemed hopelessly backward as compared with the West.

The speed with which Japan successfully undertook a program of catching up with the Western world is astonishing. By the beginning of the twentieth century it had become a world power. Industrialization of the nation was rapid, but until very recent years the Japanese economy depended heavily upon domestic agriculture. After its defeat in World War II, Japan devoted itself to peace and world trade. Domestic agriculture now holds a much less important position in the national economy. At the end of the war, nearly half the population was still agricultural. A great development of industry since that time has reduced the farming population to about 25 per cent, and the movement of labor from farming to industry proceeds at an annual rate of about 2 per cent. Japan today is experiencing the most favorable

economic conditions of its modern history. Despite a low birth rate, however, the nation's population increases annually by about 1,000,000 people and has now reached a total of nearly 100,000,000. A tiny country lacking almost all natural resources except human beings, Japan is attempting successfully to follow the only course for survival available - to make itself into a giant complex of industries of international importance.

The growth of industry has placed a premium on higher education. Successful competition in industry and trade with other nations of the world demands that a substantial part of the population receive advanced education. Improved economic circumstances that accompanied industrial expansion have at the same time put higher education within the reach of an increasing number of people, including many for whom a college education may be a social asset but not a prerequisite for earning a living.

The full extent of the changes of the past twenty years could not readily have been foreseen, and the nation was caught unprepared. Even the most far-sighted analysts could hardly have foreseen the baby boom that Japan experienced immediately after the end of the war. Even a decade ago they could hardly have forecast that a relatively enormous number of these post-war babies would be seeking admission to colleges in 1966 and 1967. A great expansion of educational facilities has come in the past decade and the rate of expansion now mounts year by year. The campuses of Japanese colleges are the scene of much building, but there seems little hope that facilities and the personnel to man them will be adequate for many years to come. But let us look at a few statistics, comparing the United States and Japan:

	<u>Japan</u>	<u>United States</u>
Population (estimate, 1966	98,000,000	195,000,000

Institutions of Higher  
Education\*

Colleges and universities	270	2,168
Public (national and local)	(106)	(784)
Private	(164)	(1,384)
Junior colleges	321	656

Students\*

Colleges and universities	794,100	4,628,516
Junior colleges	122,292	627,806

\*Figures for Japan are for the year 1963; for the United States, 1964.

These figures tell us that the number of Americans attending college is about three times as great relatively as the number of Japanese attending.

Various other facts concerning higher education in Japan contrast with circumstances in the United States, and reflect differences in economic and social conditions in the two nations. During the past decade, the sex ratio of American undergraduates has remained nearly constant. About 37 or 38 per cent have been female. In Japan, the number of female students in four-year colleges has grown during the past decade from a figure of a few per cent to 15 per cent. The number of female students in Junior Colleges, which did not exist in Japan until after World War II, is a remarkable 70 per cent of the total enrollment. Although only a small number of Japanese women pursue education leading toward advanced degrees, it is clear that higher education for women finds increasing favor. It is also clear that higher education for women means education somewhat lower than that for men.

One of the outstanding differences between American and Japanese colleges and universities is the important and anomalous position that private institutions hold in Japan. Much of the burden of higher education is born by private institutions, a substantial part of which are Christian mission schools or were once so. Despite their importance, private colleges and universities in Japan have much lower prestige than national universities and, on the average, appear to be inferior in every respect to the national institutions. Despite considerable melting during recent years of the old scheme of social stratification in the society at large, ideas of hierarchical status still have strength in the rating of the universities. Certain national universities hold the highest prestige. Of these, Tokyo University holds an uncontested pinnacle of fame, towering far above all others. The breach in fame and status between Tokyo University and other Japanese universities finds no counterpart among universities in the United States. It is commonly said that the largest commercial concerns of Japan, those with whom employment is most desirable, limit their hiring of college graduates to the products of three of the most highly rated national universities. The graduate of Tokyo University is in an especially favored position.

The American visitor to Tokyo University or almost any other campus of the nation will be impressed by the shabbiness of most of the buildings and other facilities. The yen is made to stretch a long way. Buildings are Western in architecture but they most frequently lack facilities for heating and, as compared with buildings on American campuses, are cheap in construction. Old buildings are kept in use long after the time that American practice would have condemned them. Old Japanese custom sometimes lends itself to thrift in college architecture. I recall that the toilets in a building of Tokyo

University erected in 1954 seemed planned in a way that combined tradition with modernity in thrifty fashion. Toilets for males and females were separate, but this was done by signs stating "Men" and "Women" placed on the doors of alternate toilets, several of which were aligned in a single room.

By American standards, physical conditions for teaching and studying are very poor. Classrooms are heatless or inadequately heated, and temperatures in the winter months often drop near or below the freezing point. Campuses are congested; lighting is generally poor, and libraries are seldom good.

Student life is commonly a life of thrift, although the grand spender is no rarity at the great universities, and certain institutions are known as schools for wealthy playboys. Most schools require that students wear inexpensive uniforms, and food and lodging for students is characteristically cheap. Student rooms are characteristically tiny. Many students study, sleep, eat, and entertain friends in rooms that measure six feet by nine feet. The standard of living of most Japanese college students with respect to housing may be accurately described as below that of urban slum dwellers of the United States. But there is an important difference; what might be called the slum mentality is lacking among the Japanese students.

Like their counterparts elsewhere, Japanese students are active in various social and political issues. During the past several years, most of their demonstrations have concerned the preservation of international peace. During 1964 and 1965 students conducted many demonstrations of protest against a movement to revise the national constitution to allow the creation of an army and against the coming into port of an American submarine, nuclear-powered and thus a symbol of war.

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Curricula of study followed by students strongly reflect economic conditions of the nation. The most popular majors, often combined in various ways, are economics, commerce, and law. Engineering also attracts many students. It is only in recent years that the physical sciences have had much growth, but trends of the future seem to be toward a great expansion in these fields. For those of us who favor education in the humanities, it may be comforting to know that Japanese literature has long been and continues to be a popular major.

As compared with the United States, graduate study in Japanese colleges and universities is not well developed. Part of the burden of offering necessary advanced education and of conducting research is borne by the large industrial concerns of Japan. These customarily conduct elaborate programs of training for employees engaged for administrative and technical positions, and the firms also conduct research related to their industries or products. It seems most probable, however, that the near future will see greatly increased development of graduate programs in the Japanese universities.

The Japanese professor holds fairly high prestige but his salary is seldom really adequate to support a family. Most professors moonlight by writing articles for newspapers and magazines and by writing books for popular consumption. As you may know, academic salaries in the United States have risen very greatly in the past decade. The relative increase in Japan has been much less. The great increase in students has been met in part by larger classes. The rate of increase of students during the past two or three years and the expected increase in the next several years will, however, undoubtedly soon place a premium upon instructors that will be reflected in their salaries.

Japanese colleges and universities appear to me to be one of the most conservative sectors of Japanese society, a place where tradition survives in many ways. Personal ties and personal loyalties remain very important in college life. The professor is still often the paternal master and the student his disciple. Once admitted to a college, a student is seldom dismissed for poor performance--a circumstance that finds parallels in the business world and elsewhere in Japanese life. The student may do very little work, but he will ordinarily receive a degree along with his more industrious fellows. If the student, for whatever reason, regards his relationship with his professor as personal, however, he is likely to be a paragon of diligence. It is probably for the same sort of reason that the average Japanese college student looks upon cheating in exams with a light heart. The honor system observed at Rice seems entirely out of place in a Japanese university. Cheating in exams--it is called kanningu, a word derived from the English term "cunning"--is said to be common in any course attended by a considerable number of students. The student who cheats is in no way violating obligations of personal loyalty, and for this reason he does not regard cheating as a moral issue.

The personalization of relationships appears to apply even more strongly among faculty members than between professors and students. One's success or failure as a professor depends to a large extent upon his relations with other professors and upon the patronage of elders and superiors. Rules of etiquette implying deference to superiors remain strongly in force. Whenever possible, universities practice inbreeding--that is, employment of their own graduates--and take pride in doing so. Colleges and small universities that do not offer advanced

degrees cannot ordinarily employ their own graduates, and these reluctantly draw their staffs from the large universities.

What may be most surprising to Americans is the prevailing Japanese attitude toward education in the United States. Colleges and universities of the United States hold prestige, but the Japanese student does not ordinarily want to receive a bachelor's degree from an American or European institution. Instead, he should earn a degree at a Japanese school in order to ensure employment in Japanese industry or to establish himself in academic life. If he intends to enter the academic world in Japan, He must ordinarily put aside any thought of a foreign B.A. or M.A. If he intends to become a professor, he must establish relations with his academic seniors. Once this has been done, he may pursue graduate work at a foreign university, which conveys prestige without endangering him.

Edward Norbeck

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